

# HEALTHY, HAPPY & HOT

UPDATED  
FOR 2020



A GUIDE TO YOUR RIGHTS,  
SEXUALITY & LIVING WITH HIV



# SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE RECOGNIZED AROUND THE WORLD AS HUMAN RIGHTS

Every person living with HIV is entitled to these rights and they are necessary for the development and wellbeing of all people and the societies in which they live.

Young people living with HIV may feel that sex is just not an option, but don't worry – many young people living with HIV live healthy, fun, happy and sexually fulfilling lives. You can too, if you want to! Things get easier (and sex can get even better!) as you become more comfortable with your status.

This guide aims to provide you with practical information, so that you can make informed decisions about who, where, when, and how you have sex. It explores how your human rights and sexual wellbeing are related and suggests strategies to help you make decisions about dating, relationships, sex and parenthood.

## THIS GUIDE HELPS YOU TO:

- understand the links between sex, intimacy and wellbeing
- express and enjoy your sexuality
- experience sexual pleasure
- decide if, when, and how to disclose your HIV status
- consider your safety and security when disclosing your HIV status
- understand what it means to be “undetectable”
- practise safer sex
- take care of your sexual health
- understand what a healthy relationship looks like
- choose if, when, how many, and with whom to have children
- access support and services that respect your health, dignity, autonomy, privacy and wellbeing

## THIS GUIDE IS FOR:

- young people who are living with HIV or who have a partner who is living with HIV
- young people who have recently been diagnosed with HIV as well as those who have been living with HIV for a while or who were born with HIV
- young people living with HIV who are married, in a relationship with one or more partners, as well as those who are single, dating, or just want to have sex
- young people living with HIV who are just starting to think about dating and sex as well as those who have more experience
- all young people living with HIV: regardless of your sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex characteristics
- young people living with HIV who are interested in dating and having sex with somebody of the same or opposite sex, as well as those who are exploring and questioning their sexual orientation

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE,  
THIS GUIDE IS FOR... **YOU**



## YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Achieving sexual and reproductive health relies on realizing sexual and reproductive rights, which are based on the human rights of all individuals to:

- have their bodily integrity, privacy and personal autonomy respected
- freely define their own sexuality, including sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
- decide whether and when to be sexually active
- choose their sexual partners
- have safe and pleasurable sexual experiences
- decide whether, when and whom to marry
- decide whether, when and by what means to have a child or children, and how many children to have
- have access over their lifetimes to the information, resources, services and
- support necessary to achieve all the above, free from discrimination, coercion, exploitation and violence

# SEX, INTIMACY & WELLBEING

WHETHER SEXUALITY IS EXPRESSED WITH A PARTNER, WITH SEVERAL PARTNERS, OR WITH YOURSELF, OUR SEX LIVES CAN BE A SOURCE OF GREAT PLEASURE.

While having sex, and exploring your sexuality can be exciting, it's not unusual to feel anxious about being intimate, having sex or starting a new relationship can often spark lots of questions and emotions.

Some of these concerns might be connected to your HIV status. You may worry if you can have an intimate relationship, or ever enjoy casual sex? None of these worries are true. People living with HIV fall in love, have sex, have fulfilling relationships, marry, and have children – all the things that people who don't have HIV do.

Living with HIV shouldn't stop you from having a happy, hot and healthy sex life – but only when you're ready.

## EXPRESSING AND ENJOYING YOUR SEXUALITY

Young people living with HIV have the right to express their sexuality without fear of judgement, violence or persecution.

Sexuality is how we express our sexual feelings. It can be expressed through our bodies, our clothes, the way we look, walk, talk and dance.

In many cultures it is a taboo to talk about sexuality. This lack of communication makes it difficult for people to enjoy their sexuality safely and express their love and care for each other fully.

Sexual orientation describes who you feel attracted to. Some of us may feel strongly attracted to people of a different sex/gender than us (heterosexual,

straight); some of us may feel strongly attracted to people of the same sex/gender as us (homosexual, gay, lesbian); some of us may feel attracted to both (bisexual). Other people may not feel sexually attracted to anyone (asexual).

Sometimes sexual orientation changes over time, and for some it stays the same throughout our lives. Remember: Sexual orientation isn't a choice, it can't be changed by therapy, treatment, pressure, support or encouragement from family or friends.

# SEXUAL PLEASURE: HAVE FUN, EXPLORE AND BE YOURSELF

YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEXUAL PLEASURE. SEX CAN FEEL GREAT AND CAN BE REALLY FUN, IF IT'S SOMETHING YOU CHOOSE TO DO!

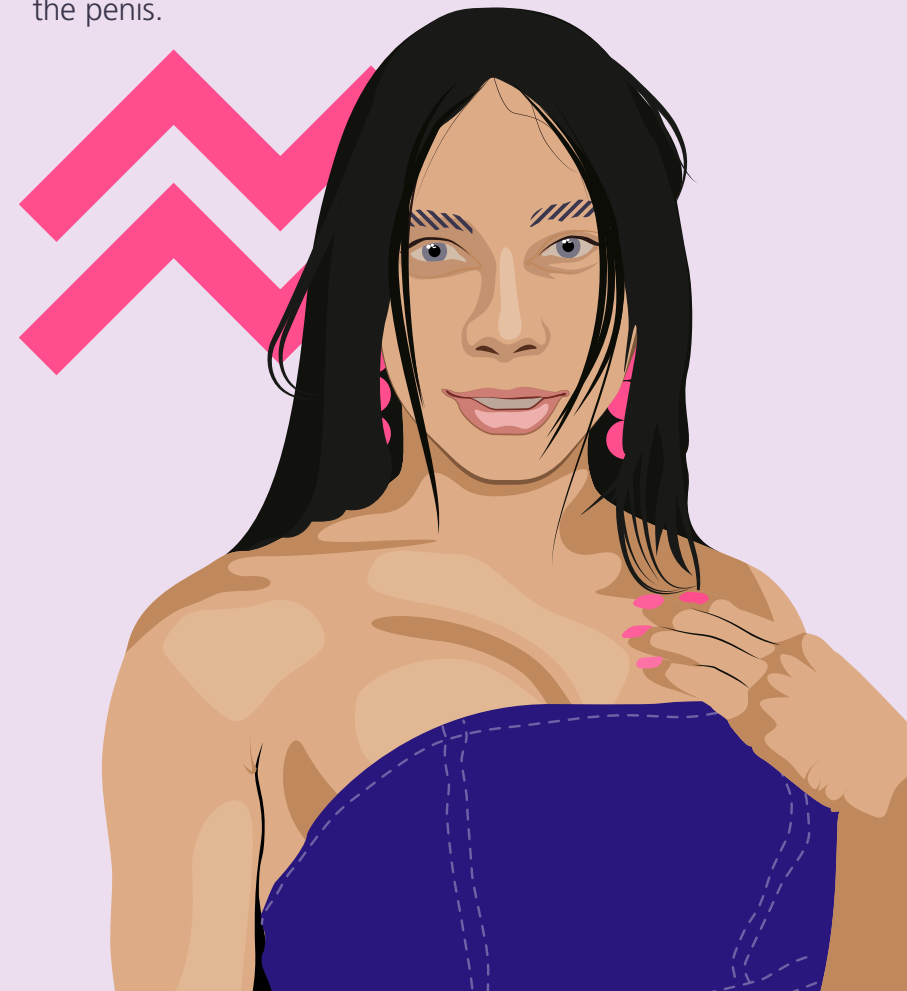
Many people think sex is just about vaginal or anal intercourse... but there are lots of different ways to have sex and lots of different types of sex. Sex can include kissing, touching, licking, tickling, sucking, and cuddling. Some people like to have aggressive sex, while others like to have soft and slow sex with their partners. There is no right or wrong way to have sex. Just have fun, explore and be yourself, as long as all parties agree!

Improve your sex life by getting to know your own body. Play with yourself! Masturbation is a great way to find out more about your body and what you find sexually stimulating. You can also use sex toys to explore what you like, and what sensations feel best!

Don't stop there: Find out how your partner's body works, what makes them feel good and what gives them pleasure. Talking with your partner about what you each like and what feels good is the best way to have great sex.

Take time to explore your own and your partner's bodies. Your skin is the largest erogenous zone on your body, and your mind plays a big role in your desire for sex and sexual pleasure. Caress and lick your partner's skin. Explore your partner's body with your hands and mouth. Mix things up by using different kinds of touch from very soft to hard. Talk about or act out your fantasies. Talk dirty to them. Tickle, tease and make them feel good.

Do you know about people's hot spots? The clitoris, just above the vaginal opening where the labia meet, is the only organ in the human body to have the sole purpose of sexual pleasure. The penis is also sensitive to people's touch, especially the head. Some also find touching in and around the anus to be pleasurable, while some people enjoy prostate stimulation. The prostate is a gland located between the bladder and the penis.



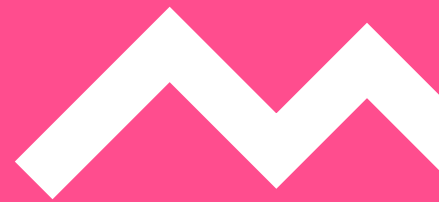


## CONSENT

The best sex is when each partner enjoys it. A core principle of good sex is talking to your partner about it before it happens. You need to make sure your partner is happy about the sexual interaction and wants to be there. When talking things through with your partner(s), it's important to remember that consent is more about receiving an enthusiastic "yes", than the absence of a clear "no". However, it is also more than just a verbal agreement. Consent can also be expressed through someone's body language and enthusiasm. Stop if anything hurts and let your partner know how you feel – sex that's painful or uncomfortable should not continue.

If you're exploring rough sex, or bondage, it might be worth discussing a safe word to help communicate when you have reached your limit or want to stop.

**Remember:** Consent is also an on-going arrangement not just a one-off conversation, so keep checking in with your partner! You can change your mind about what you want to do at any time, even if you've done something before. A previous relationship does not constitute consent. Coercion or threat of violence should also not be used to establish consent.



# DECIDING IF, WHEN & HOW TO DISCLOSE YOUR HIV STATUS

## YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE IF, WHEN, AND HOW THEY TELL OTHERS ABOUT THEIR HIV STATUS

Sharing your HIV status is called disclosure. Your decision about whether to disclose may change with different people and situations.

Safer sex is a shared responsibility. When you share your HIV status, you and your partner(s) can work together to make your sex life pleasurable and safe! Many young people who are living with HIV or have a partner who is living with HIV find that they get the most sexual pleasure when they know that they are having sex as safely as possible.

One of the hardest things about dating, sex and relationships is the possibility of being rejected by someone you are attracted to or in a relationship

with. You may worry that your current or potential partner(s) will reject you, or get angry or violent, if they find out you are living with HIV.

There are lots of people who are or gradually become comfortable being with someone who has HIV. There are other people who may never get used to it or who may even stigmatise or discriminate against people living with HIV. While people have the right to choose who to have relationships and sex with, it is not okay for someone to treat you badly because you are living with HIV. Your HIV status doesn't impact your ability to be a good partner. Being in a relationship with someone who has HIV is just as fulfilling and satisfying as with anyone else.

## ONLY YOU KNOW THE BEST TIME TO DISCLOSE YOUR HIV STATUS...

There are many reasons that people do not share their HIV status. They may not want people to know they are living with HIV because of stigma and discrimination within their community. They may worry that people will find out something else they have kept secret, like they are using drugs, having sex outside of a marriage, having sex with people of the same gender, or having done sex work. People in long-term relationships who find out they are living with HIV sometimes fear that their partner will react violently or end the relationship. If you don't want to disclose to your partner, you need to make sure you are still practising safer sex. You can do this by taking your HIV treatment regularly to reduce your viral load, or by using condoms.

There are lots of people who don't mind whether their partner(s) is HIV negative or positive. Keep in mind that there are many reasons that people turn down sexual and romantic advances – and most have nothing to do with HIV.

## TIPS FOR TELLING SEXUAL PARTNERS YOUR HIV STATUS:

→ **Practise disclosing to people you trust.**

This could include family members or friends. Remember that not everyone will react in the same way.

→ **Speak to other young people living with HIV,** or members of a support group, to learn from their experiences on different ways to disclose.

→ **Consider the timing.** When dating, some people tell their partner when they first meet while others wait till later. Do whatever makes you the most comfortable. If you are in a long-term relationship, try to find a time when your partner is calm and has time for a long conversation.

→ Choose a location that you feel comfortable and safe in – a private place like in your or a friend's house or in a public place where other people are around.

→ Test how your partner(s) may react to your HIV status by asking them questions like 'what do you think about HIV?' and 'have you met anyone with HIV?', or talking about a news story. This will help you get a sense of what they think about HIV and how they might react.

→ Think about their potential responses. What if they say nothing? What if they get angry or sad? How will respond to different reactions?

→ **Be ready for a conversation about HIV after you disclose.** Your partner(s) may have questions about living with HIV, such as the risk of transmission, and safer sex. They may also have questions about your relationship. Answering people's questions can be difficult so think about any information and leaflets you can give them to help them understand more about HIV. A counsellor can also help with this.

→ More often than not, disclosing is a process rather than a one-time event. Expect several conversations. Your partner(s) may need time to deal with their emotions. They may have new questions about HIV.

→ **Plan to meet up with people you trust after you disclose.** You can celebrate a positive outcome, discuss strategies for supporting a hesitant but willing partner, or get support for dealing with a negative reaction.

Disclosing your status can be difficult, especially if you are in a long-term relationship or marriage. Many people find that their partners are supportive. It can be hard to talk with your partner about your status. You may fear a violent reaction, losing the relationship, or maybe even losing your home, access to money, or your children.

There are many places that can help you figure out how to tell your partner and understand your rights to property and children if the relationship ends – for example, your local people living with HIV group, counsellors, women's groups, and legal clinics.



## SEXUAL PLEASURE IN A DIGITAL AGE

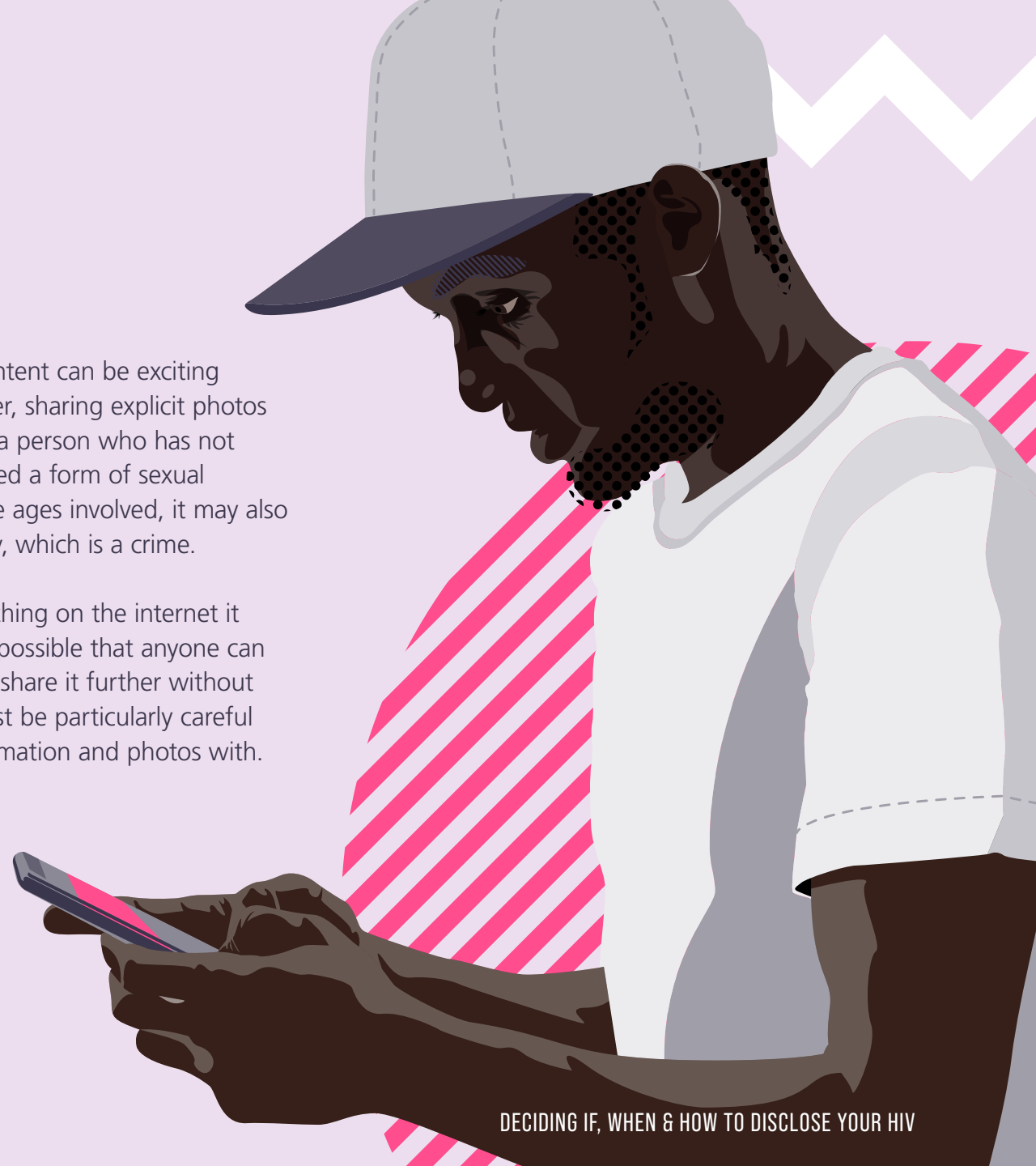
The internet can be useful when it comes to learning about sex and exploring our sexual preferences.

Social media and online dating apps give us the opportunity to connect with new people. However, sharing personal information with strangers over the internet can put you, and your family and friends at risk. This includes sharing or telling people your HIV status.

Pornography or sexually explicit pictures and videos are easy to find. Some watch regularly, while others look out of curiosity about other people's bodies and about sex. But porn can lead to unrealistic expectations. So know that porn sex may be different from your experience. Actors in porn don't often appear to ask for consent, which is always a must in real-life sex; and often don't appear to use condoms or other contraception. Please remember if you perform or attempt to obtain a sexual act without your partner(s)' consent, it is sexual violence.

Sharing sexually explicit content can be exciting and a real turn on. However, sharing explicit photos or content with, or about, a person who has not consented can be considered a form of sexual violence. Depending on the ages involved, it may also count as child pornography, which is a crime.

Any time we upload something on the internet it stops being only ours. It is possible that anyone can see it and even take it and share it further without our permission, so you must be particularly careful about who you share information and photos with.



# SHARING YOUR HIV STATUS SAFELY

SOME COUNTRIES HAVE LAWS THAT VIOLATE THE RIGHT OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV TO DECIDE WHEN AND WHETHER TO DISCLOSE THEIR HIV STATUS.

Some countries have laws that say people living with HIV must tell their sexual partner(s) about their status before having sex, even if they use condoms or only engage in sexual activity with a very low risk of transmitting HIV to someone else. These laws violate the rights of people living with HIV by forcing people to disclose or face the possibility of criminal charges.

Some countries also impose travel restrictions and mandatory HIV testing, which prevent people living with HIV from entering, transiting through, studying, working or living in a country. These legal barriers can also prevent you from disclosing your status and accessing health care services.

Strategies to protect yourself:

- Find out the specific laws in your country, visit <http://www.hivjustice.net/site/countries> or speak to your service providers or local support group.
- Open communication and trust are important for healthy relationships. At the same time, it is also wise to take steps to protect yourself from criminalization. The best way to protect yourself is to share your status with your partner(s) before becoming intimate (including kissing, oral sex or full penetrative vaginal and anal sex).
- New laws criminalising the transmission and exposure of HIV to others are based on whether the person living with HIV has disclosed their HIV-positive status to their partner(s) or kept it hidden. It is good that you decide to disclose your HIV status to your partner. If you think you may need to keep evidence, you can use any form. Just follow your intuition.
- Demonstrate that you have taken steps to reduce the chances of your partner(s) becoming infected. This includes choosing lower risk sexual activities, using condoms consistently and adhering to your treatment, if you are on antiretroviral therapy (ART).
- Get involved in advocacy to change laws that violate your rights or uphold laws that protect your rights to health and privacy. Contact your local network of people living with HIV.

# UNDETECTABLE VIRAL LOAD:

## WHAT IS IT, AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR MY SEX LIFE?

People living with HIV, who are on effective antiretroviral therapy (ART) and with an undetectable viral load for more than six months, cannot sexually transmit HIV.

Antiretroviral treatment works by reducing the amount of the virus in the blood to undetectable levels. **This means the levels of HIV are so low that the virus cannot be passed on to anyone else.** This is called having an undetectable viral load or being undetectable. ART not only helps keep you healthy but helps protect your partner(s) too.

It can take up to six months for some people to become undetectable from when they start treatment. Doctors are confident that you can remain untransmissible as long as you:

- take your medication every day, as prescribed
- have your viral load checked regularly

Some countries have limited access to viral load testing, so speak to your doctor or healthcare provider about this.

## UNDETECTABLE = UNTRANSMITTABLE!

If you're living with HIV, stay on track with your treatment and viral load testing. There has been no evidence that HIV can be transmitted from a partner with an undetectable viral load.



# HAVING SAFER SEX

## YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV HAVE THE RIGHT TO PRACTISE SAFER SEX

As a person living with HIV you may feel like you have all the responsibility for talking about safer sex and keeping your sexual partner(s) free from HIV. For people living with HIV, this means adhering to treatment to keeping your viral load undetectable, or using a condom. But remember it is your sexual partner(s)'s responsibility too. Just because you have HIV does not mean all the responsibility is on you.

Safer sex is something that should be discussed openly with your partner(s). Discussions should involve decisions around types of sexual activities you engage in and agreeing on ways to reduce the risk of HIV, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and unintended pregnancies. No one should feel pressure to perform condomless sex to win your partners' trust or approval.

### TIPS FOR HAVING SEX SAFER:

- **Know the facts:** Understanding how HIV and other STIs are transmitted from one person to another can help you and your partners make decisions about how to make your sex safer. Ask your local sexual health clinic for more information.
- **Get tested:** Don't make assumptions about whether someone has HIV or other STIs. The only way to know for sure if you or someone else has HIV or an STI is to get tested. If you're having sex, it's a good idea to have a sexual health check-up at least once a year, or more frequently if you change sexual partners. If you have oral or anal sex, ask your health provider to also check your mouth, throat and rectum. Encourage your partner(s) to get checked regularly too. You can even go together! If one or both of you are living with HIV you still need to practice safer sex (such as treatment adherence and viral load monitoring, condoms or PrEP).
- **Take your antiretroviral medication as prescribed:** Young people living with HIV have different treatment and care needs. Make sure that when you start your treatment you take it according to the prescription. If you have a partner that knows your HIV status and is supportive, it can be a good idea to get them to help remind you to take your HIV treatment. Good adherence helps you to keep your viral load down. People who have an undetectable viral load cannot pass on HIV infection to their partners.
- **Ask about PrEP:** If your partner is HIV negative, they might want to consider taking pre-exposure prophylaxis (or PrEP). PrEP can stop HIV from taking hold and spreading throughout your body. When taken daily, PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV – although it does not protect against STIs. If you or your partner are interested in PrEP speak to your local healthcare provider. Talk your health care provider to see if PrEP is available and easily accessible!

- **Use a condom:** Internal (female) and external (male) condoms provide dual protection and are great tools for preventing both the transmission of HIV and other STIs, as well as unintended pregnancies. To be most effective, the condom must be put on before there is contact between your genitals and your partner(s)'s genitals, anus or mouth. You can find out more and even get free condoms at your local sexual health clinic.
- **Use lubricant:** Lube feels great and is lots of fun (and there are so many sensations and flavours to try!). It also reduces the risk of tearing or injury, especially if you're having anal sex as the anus doesn't usually produce enough lubrication for comfortable penetration. If using a latex condom, make sure your lube is not oil-based. While oil-based lubes are longer-lasting, they can make condoms tear more easily.



## REMEMBER:

If you choose to use a condom and it breaks, your partner can take post-exposure prophylaxis, or PEP. PEP can stop HIV developing, even if someone has been exposed to the virus. However, it doesn't always work. To be effective PEP must be taken as soon as possible, but no later than 72 hours after having sex. Sometimes it can be hard to get a hold of, especially when sexual health clinics are closed – but is often also available at the emergency room in hospitals. If you are at risk of becoming pregnant, you can also take the emergency contraception pill or have a copper Intrauterine device (IUD) inserted. Emergency contraception is most effective when taken 72 hours after unprotected sex but it can be taken up to 5 days later. Talk to your healthcare provider about both these options.

## RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Sometimes people feel unable to speak with their partners and negotiate safer sex – this is especially true for women in countries or communities with significant gender inequalities. If you are not able to talk with your partner(s), consider speaking with a counsellor or some other support.

Some people have sex when they have been drinking alcohol or using drugs. This is your choice. Being drunk or high can affect the decisions you might make about sex and safer sex. If you want to have sex and think you might get drunk or high, plan ahead by bringing condoms and lube or putting them close to where you usually have sex. That way you won't forget them in the heat of the moment. But make sure your partner is able to engage enthusiastically to ensure consent. It is also not okay for someone to have sex with you if you are staggering, incoherent or have passed out because of alcohol or drugs. This would be considered rape and you could face criminal charges.

Some people choose not to have safer sex. If this is something you and your partner agree to, then it is your choice. It is not always possible to talk to your partner(s) about or to practise safer sex. Your partner might get angry or aggressive, or you don't have access to condoms, or other preventative tools (like PrEP) or you don't have a safe place to have sex. There are other ways to somewhat reduce the risks of HIV, other STIs, and unintended pregnancies without using condoms:

- Choose sexual activities that are at lower risk (e.g. kissing, masturbation, touching, oral sex).
- Use lubricant to reduce the chances of micro-tears in the vagina and anus.
- Limit the amount of body fluids like semen and vaginal secretions that you and your partner(s) share.
- Ejaculate (cum) outside, not inside.
- Get tested regularly for HIV and other STIs.

Some people choose to engage sexually with others with the same HIV status as them. Called "serosorting", this risk reduction strategy is thought to reduce the risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV as partners share the same HIV status (negative or positive). It offers no protection from other STIs.

Sometimes two people with penises (one HIV-positive and the other HIV-negative) sexually positioning themselves to reduce the risk of passing on HIV when having penetrative sex. This risk reduction strategy is often called "strategic positioning" which involves the HIV-negative partner taking on the insertive position (the "top") because a penetrative partner is less likely to acquire HIV than a person who is taking the receptive position (the "bottom"). Although this reduces the risk, HIV can still be transmitted and it offers no protection from other STIs.

# SEXUAL HEALTH MATTERS:

YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR SEXUAL HEALTH, AND IT'S IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF.

There are many good things about sex, such as intimacy and pleasure. Sex also comes with risks such as the possibility of HIV, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies. You have the right to information to help you make informed decisions and understand your sexual health, and to health services to help you monitor and take care of your sexual and reproductive health.

STIs are infections that can be transmitted through sexual contact. Some STIs, including syphilis, are more common in people living with HIV. If left untreated



## STI SYMPTOMS

- Unusual or bad-smelling liquid coming from the penis or vagina
- Unusual bleeding from the vagina
- Pain and burning when passing urine
- Sores, rashes, blisters, warts or any other sort of irritation on or around the penis, vagina or anus
- Itching, burning or pain in the genitals
- Pain during sex
- Lower belly pain

It's important to remember some people may have no visible symptoms at first, especially infections in the vagina or anus. People can pass on an infection to others without knowing it, even if they look healthy.



STIs can lead to pelvic pain, infertility and in rare cases, serious conditions like cervical or anal cancer.

Many people living with HIV don't think they need to practise safer sex if they have sex with another HIV-positive person. But you can still be at risk of acquiring other STIs that could affect your health.

If you have a vagina, HIV can make you prone to vaginal infections – yeast, bacterial vaginosis, and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) – and abnormal growth of cells on your cervix that can turn into cancer if left untreated. Urinating after sex can help prevent painful urinary infections. You can keep your vagina healthy by getting an annual gynaecological exam – including a cervical cancer screening – and getting any sores, bumps, or irritations on your genitals checked out by a doctor as soon as possible. Ask your healthcare provider for more information about gynaecological health.

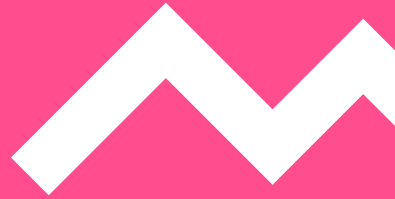
If you have a penis, HIV can reduce your resistance to infections that cause open sores or warts on your penis and even discharge. If untreated, these infections can get worse or can be passed onto others and can increase your vulnerability to picking up other infections. Keep your penis healthy by checking regularly for sores and discharge (if uncircumcised, remember to check under the

foreskin) and getting a penile examination from your doctor. Ask your healthcare provider for more information about sexual health services.

And don't forget your bottom! Sometimes it is difficult to know if you have an STI inside or around your anus. Use condoms, including internal (female) condoms during anal sex – with plenty of lubricant! Any anal contact means you might come into contact with faecal matter, and that might expose you to parasites or hepatitis A or E. You don't need to douche before you have anal sex, but practising good basic hygiene will help protect you – and you could also use latex or nitrile gloves.

Hepatitis C can also be transmitted during sex. Make sure you get tested. If you test positive, let healthcare professionals know, so you can access treatment. Interactions between HIV and Hepatitis C treatments can be complex and cause side effects. Make sure you talk with your healthcare provider if you are on treatment and experiencing side effects.

Living with HIV also makes people more vulnerable to catching other diseases like Tuberculosis (TB). The risk of catching TB is higher in some countries and locations. Make sure that you go to the doctor regularly if you are living with HIV to ensure that you are regularly screened for TB.



## TESTING FOR STIS

There are many reasons why young people may not want to get tested for an STI at a clinic, including fears around confidentiality, stigma, discrimination, accessibility, availability and cost. If worried about someone taking a swab from your genitals – it is now common for you to take your own sample. In some countries, you can even do this at home with a self-collection kit, and send in the mail to a laboratory for testing. Before using a self-collection kit, it's best to talk to a health professional, such as your pharmacist, doctor or community health worker. They can help you decide which type of test is best for you and explain how to use it. They can also discuss your results with you and talk you through any follow-up treatment that is needed if you test is positive.



# SEX & HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

## YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV HAVE THE RIGHT TO PURSUE HEALTHY, HAPPY RELATIONSHIPS.

Casual sex is really enjoyable and a great way to explore your sexuality. Sometimes you might want to take things further and begin a relationship with your partner(s). A healthy, long term relationship makes your partner(s) feel good about themselves. If you're wondering what a healthy relationship looks like, here are some questions to think about:

- **Respect:** Do you listen to each other? Are you proud of each other? Are you kind to each other?
- **Trust:** Are you both cool with spending time apart from each other? Do you feel secure about the relationship?
- **Equality:** Do you both get to make decisions about your relationship and how you spend your time? Do you give and take equally? Do you want to pleasure each other? Do you consider both people's feelings when talking and making decisions?
- **Good communication:** Do you talk about your feelings with each other? Do you listen to each other without judging?
- **Honesty:** Do you both admit when you're wrong? Do you talk openly about your feelings, even when it's hard?

## HOW DO YOU SPOT AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP?

An abusive relationship is when someone you're going out with hurts you or repeatedly tries to control you. It can happen to anyone. It doesn't matter your age, gender, sexual orientation. It can take many forms including:

- Coercion
- Controlling your finances/resources
- Verbal abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual violence. This includes forcing or pressurising you to have sex (rape) or do sexual things when you don't want to. It also includes stopping you from using a condom or contraception when you want to.

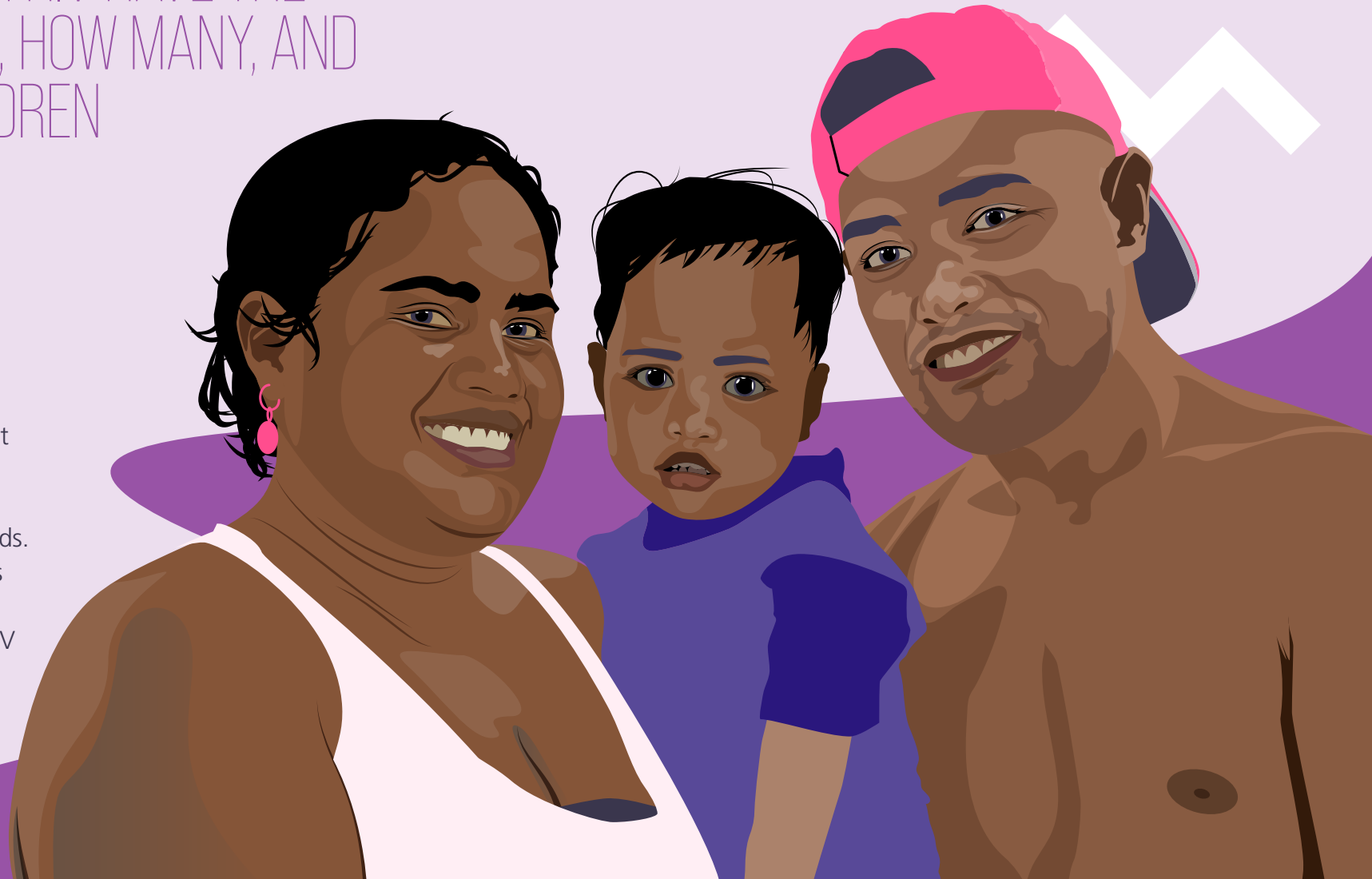
Abuse and violence are never your fault. You deserve to feel safe with the person you're dating. If you feel worried about you or a friend, speak to a counsellor or community health worker.

# POSITIVE PARENTHOOD

YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE IF, WHEN, HOW MANY, AND WITH WHOM TO HAVE CHILDREN

Sometimes it can feel like everyone has an opinion about whether and when you should have children. Some young people living with HIV are encouraged by service providers, family and friends to not have children, while other young people living with HIV face pressure by family, friends and their partner(s) to have children. Knowing your rights and family planning options can help you make decisions about positive parenthood and manage other people.

Often young people living with HIV want to have kids. People living with HIV can have healthy pregnancies and share a long life with their children. Pregnancy itself will not make your HIV infection worse and HIV does not change your pregnancy.



Women can give birth to children without transmitting HIV. Healthcare providers can discuss preventative measures to prevent transmission during pregnancy as well as during labour and delivery. The risk of babies contracting HIV is significantly reduced through preventative measures such as taking antiretroviral medications and avoiding breastfeeding.

Make sure you feel confident speaking to your service provider about these issues. If they cannot help, or you have a bad experience, speak to your counsellor and try to find another healthcare provider.

## MAKE A PLAN

Your local sexual health clinic can help you create a plan – whether it is for having children safely, preventing or terminating unintended pregnancies, or figuring out how to start a family if you are single or in a same-sex relationship, including adoption.

Your family planning strategy is more likely to be successful when you work together with your partner. If you are sexually active with someone of the opposite sex, take time to talk together about this possibility and come up with a strategy for a safe pregnancy or to prevent unintended pregnancies.

Remember! Abstinence is not always possible or realistic!

## USING CONTRACEPTIVES

Some people want to avoid getting pregnant. There are many different methods to prevent pregnancies, called contraception. You can use a barrier method like male and female condoms, spermicides and diaphragms; hormonal methods like the birth control pill; long-term reversible contraception such as implants, injections or intra-uterine devices and sterilization.

Other people choose to use other methods like fertility awareness or the withdrawal method (i.e. where the penis pulls out the vagina before ejaculation). Pulling out is not a reliable method for preventing pregnancy. Sperm can leak out of the penis before ejaculation (pre-cum) and your partner may not pull out in time, especially if the sex feels pleasurable.

The methods vary in how effectively they prevent pregnancy, whether they are permanent or temporary, their side effects, and whether they also prevent HIV and other STIs. Many people use two methods of contraception. You may need to experiment with

different kinds of contraception to find the right method(s) for you. Your healthcare provider can provide more information about these methods and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Your HIV status should not limit your contraceptive choice. If you choose to use a contraceptive pill, injection, implant or hormonal intra-uterine system please take advice from your health service provider to make sure there are no interactions with your HIV treatment, if you are currently on effective antiretroviral treatment.

Sometimes women may be worried or suspect that they are pregnant if, for example, the condom breaks during sex or they have unprotected sex. If this is the case, a woman can take emergency contraception (either a pill or a copper IUD) to prevent pregnancy. Emergency contraception is most effective within 72 hours but can help to prevent a pregnancy up to 5 days after sex.

You may worry about giving HIV to your partner(s), picking up another STI, or contracting HIV while trying to get pregnant. There are ways to have a family that can reduce the risk of HIV/STI transmission. Your local prevention of mother-to-child transmission clinic, support group for people living with HIV or other people you know who are living with HIV, can provide more information on how to stay safe, while getting pregnant.

## SAFE ABORTION

It's possible for you to become pregnant even when you haven't planned it– almost half of all the pregnancies around the world are unplanned. People may not have access to contraception, it may not work to prevent pregnancy, or they might become pregnant as a result of sexual violence.

The choices available to you coping with an unintended pregnancy are; to end the pregnancy by having an abortion, to continue the pregnancy and raise the child, to ask a relative to take care of the child or to place the baby for adoption. The availability of these options will depend on local laws, norms and practices. You should have access to reliable information and support so that you can make the decision about what to do for yourself.

Unplanned pregnancies can be stressful and can strain the relationship, whether you decide to continue or terminate the pregnancy. Sometimes wanted pregnancies where situations change or there is a health issue, you may also want an abortion. You must access support from a qualified health provider or reliable information source so that you can access supportive counselling, safe pre and post-abortion care and follow-up services.

**Specifically, don't try any methods or medication that is not from a credible source.**

In most countries, having an abortion is legal. In some countries, women are able to take abortion medication without going to a clinic. However, women may receive an unsafe abortion, such as bleach, when safe abortion and reliable information are not available or accessible. If you are not sure about the situation in your country, you can check the world abortion laws map (<https://reproductiverights.org/worldabortionlaws>).

You should have access to medical or surgical abortion according to your preferences. Surgical abortion is a micro surgical procedure performed by a trained health professional with a manual or electrical vacuum. Medical abortion is taking the combination of two types of medications, called mifepristone and misoprostol. If mifepristone is not available close to you, taking misoprostol only is also okay. All these abortion options are safe and effective if you have access to decent information and follow-up services and it's done within clinical settings and using reliable medication.

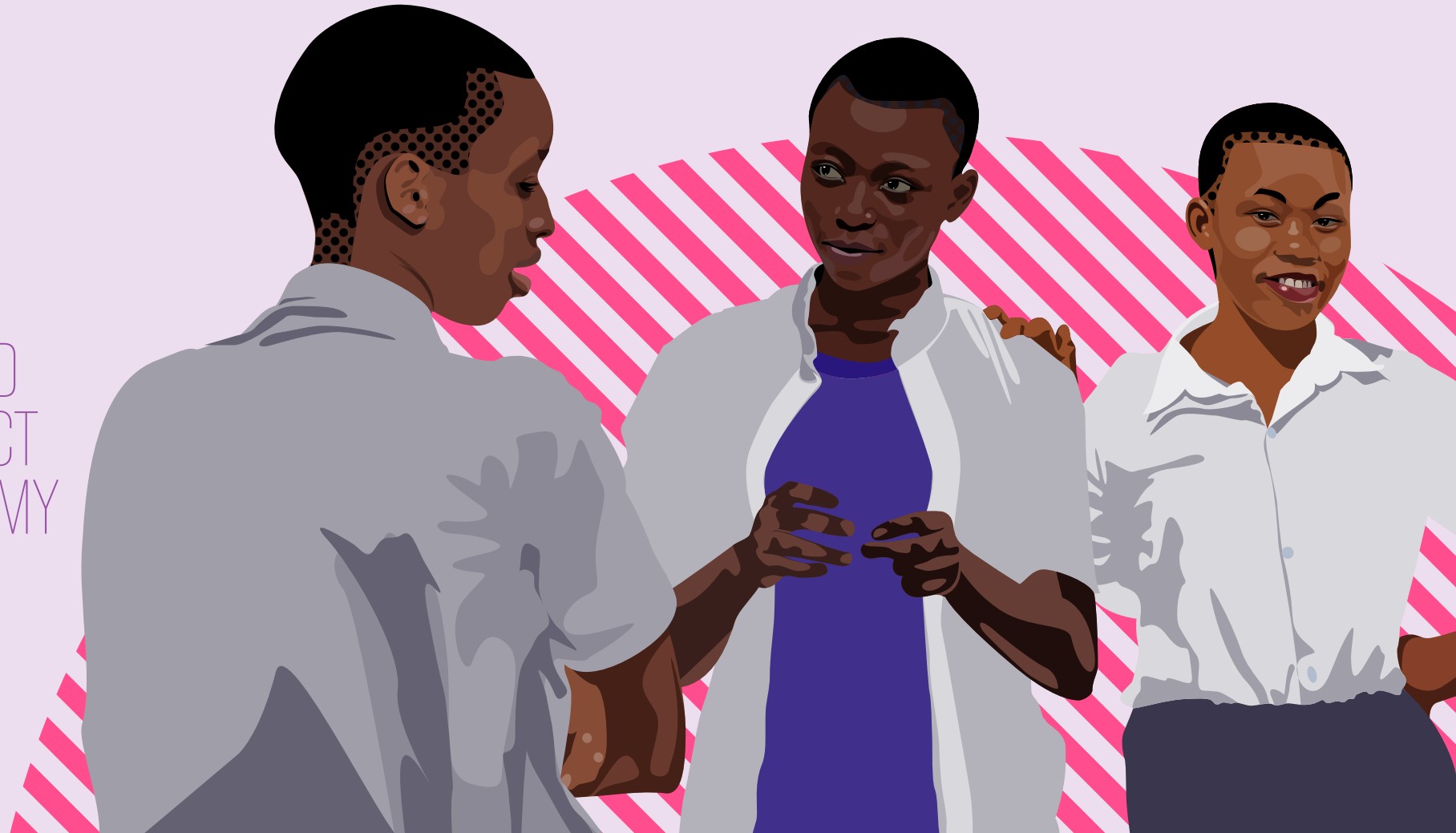
After having an abortion, you should not hesitate to contact a health worker if you experience continuous bleeding, smelly liquid coming out of the vagina, pain in the lower belly or fever and shaking. You may also need to know where you can access further treatment, counselling and information on sexual and reproductive health and contraception.

# I GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING  
WITH HIV HAVE THE  
RIGHT TO SUPPORT AND  
SERVICES THAT RESPECT  
THEIR DIGNITY, AUTONOMY  
AND WELLBEING

We all need a friendly ear and some supportive advice. There are many potential sources of support for young people living with HIV, including friends, family, post-test clubs, support workers and people living with HIV networks. Your partner(s) may be able to provide support for some of the issues you

are facing. For example, if you are on anti-retroviral treatment, your partner can help support you to remember to take the treatment when you are supposed to. This can help your overall health and wellbeing. If your partner is also living with HIV you can provide support to each other.



There are many people, groups and organizations that provide support and services for people living with and affected by HIV. Look for support and services that respect your dignity, right to freely make choices about your body and health, and help you live positively. This includes respecting your sexuality and your right to pursue pleasurable and safe sex and positive parenthood.

Many communities have centres that offer youth-friendly health services. These are places where you can access information and health services to help you take care of your sexual health, like testing for

STIs and advice on condoms and contraceptives. They often have hours that are convenient for young people, and staff who understand young people, will not judge you and will treat you with respect. You should find out whether there are any centres near to you where you can go without needing the permission of your parents or guardians. You should also make sure that you can trust the staff not to tell anyone you were there or why. You can also get information and health services to help you take care of your sexual health from your healthcare provider or local sexual health clinic.

LOOK FOR SUPPORT AND SERVICES THAT RESPECT YOUR DIGNITY, RIGHT TO FREELY MAKE CHOICES ABOUT YOUR BODY AND HEALTH, AND HELP YOU LIVE POSITIVELY.

THIS INCLUDES RESPECTING YOUR SEXUALITY AND YOUR RIGHT TO PURSUE PLEASURABLE AND SAFE SEX AND POSITIVE PARENTHOOD.

## ABOUT IPPF

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is a global service provider and a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. We are a worldwide movement of national organizations working with and for communities and individuals.

IPPF works towards a world where women, men and young people everywhere have control over their own bodies, and therefore their destinies. A world where they are free to choose parenthood or not; free to decide how many children they will have and when; free to pursue healthy sexual lives without fear of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. A world where gender or sexuality are no longer a source of inequality or stigma. We will not retreat from doing everything we can to safeguard these important choices and rights for current and future generations.

UPDATED  
FOR 2020



# HEALTHY, HAPPY AND HOT IS A GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THEIR SEXUAL RIGHTS, AND LIVE HEALTHY, FUN, HAPPY AND SEXUALLY FULFILLING LIVES.

The guide aims to give information on how young people living with HIV can increase sexual pleasure, take care of their health, practice safer sex, have children, develop strong intimate relationships and access support.

This publication supports the implementation of Sexual Rights: An IPPF Declaration.

This publication was produced by the Technical Team at the IPPF Central Office with input from youth advisors and volunteers across the Federation. Special appreciation to Frontline AIDS and Youth Focal Points for providing additional technical support.

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